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## Interview with Judge Robert E. Quinn, August 7th, 1972

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Side 1

Mr. Smith:

This is the one, long before Green or anybody else talked about Quonset.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, that's right. That's probably 1937, I think, Matt, and that suggested the development of Quonset Point and Block Island, and so forth as a defense perimeter, you know, for the United States long before, well, of course, it was before Germany declared war- it was before WWII. That really didn't begin until 1939. I think that tells it. Is there a date on that?

Mr. Smith:

It says 5 April 38, Judge.

Judge Quinn:

'38. That was before the war broke.

Mr. Smith:

I see you did your homework on this, Alfred Thayer Mahan.

Judge Quinn:

A little bit, yes. Of course, I was...

Mr. Smith:

What was at Newport at that time?

Judge Quinn:

Well, the War College was there, of course.

Mr. Smith:

Just the War College.

Judge Quinn:

Oh yes, I had spoken at the War College and had given out the diplomas to the graduating class at the War College in 1935. When Admiral Calpus was the commanding officer. He was a "four-star" Admiral. Maybe there would

be one or two or three, I guess in the whole Navy at that time. They named that road that was built from Broadway down to the Naval Base in Newport the "Admiral Calpus Road". That was built I think in 1938, and named after Admiral Calpus. But I had been at the War College once or twice with Admiral Calpus. I had spoken to the class there. I think the graduating class of 1935; I was lieutenant governor. And then I was his guest there once or twice after that. And then they did build that road from the top of Broadway down to the War College. And we had quite a development in Newport at that time, you know. Which has- it's a very fine harbor. Very deep water, you know. And the Navy was always I think quite proud of Newport as a Naval Base.

Mr. Smith

I would have to say it's probably the best Base on the East Coast. Even better than Savannah, or the Charleston Naval Yard. Of course, Charleston is way up the Cooper River.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, I think maybe it is. I know that many, well Admiral Sims, for instance had the highest regard apparently for Newport and Narragansett Bay. And so, I think perhaps, maybe it was a result of my affiliation with many of the old Navy men in Newport that I had sent that telegram to Roosevelt.

Mr. Smith:

Were you still in the naval reserve at that time, Judge, from the WWI carryover?

Judge Quinn:

No, I didn't go back in until 1940. I'm pretty sure it was 1940. It wasn't in in 1938. No.

Mr. Smith:

Do you mind if I go back to the Race Track War, Judge?

I finally got a chance to pick up...

Judge Quinn:

Okay, sure.

Mr. Smith:

We were talking about Bill Edward's article.

Judge Quinn:

Yes.

Mr. Smith:

I had read it once and I just went back to review it. I brought it along today. It catches some of the flavor of those days. Of course, he has a reprint in the Star Tribune. "Governor Quinn will land in Butlers", I think.

Mr. Smith:

"Quinn will land in Butlers, O'Hara says."

Judge Quinn:

Oh yes, that's right.

Mr. Smith:

And they had "Grass Monkey Home First" and "Gansett 8th", on the top of the...

Judge Quinn:

I see.

Mr. Smith:

But needless to say, Judge, just judging from your own makeup, your character, and everything else, you must have reacted strongly to this type of rather cheap press, really.

Judge Quinn:

Well, I certainly didn't like it. I mean it was rather spectacular.

of course, I suppose. But on the otherhand, I don't think that bothered me very much. So it doesn't seem to me that I was disturbed very much by a thing like that. My recollection is that it didn't disturb me at all.

Mr. Smith:

This man seemed to come off sort of as a buffoon, O'Hara, that nothing was sacred in the sense of office-holding or integrity. He'd make light of. That's just my impression here from reading. He'd make light of people-use any tactic that would...

Judge Quinn:

Yes, I would say he was completely unscrupulous, that he didn't care what he said, whether it was true or untrue or how scurrilous it was. I mean he was built that way. I think, however, that would be perhaps as a result of John Barleycorn. In other words, Jim Dooley had told me long, long ago that he'd start in the morning to consume large amounts of liquor and that supplied him with the courage to do anything he wanted to do-false courage, but after he got a few under his belt, why the truth went out the window if it was ever in the window. Bill Edwards, by the way, was one of the attorneys for the Journal in the filibuster fights, you know, Claude Branch and Bill Edwards, and Phil Joslin and so forth. All very reputable lawyers, very able lawyers. I think Bill Edwards might have been a rather young man at that time, probably be in his twenties. But he was counsel for the Providence Journal, even in 1923-24.

Mr. Smith:

He did do an article on, how many senators was it "My 27," oh excuse me ... "My 17 Senators"?

Judge Quinn:

Yes, I guess there were, there were actually 20, I think involved, you know. There were twenty Republican senators. One of them was kept here in the Senate to raise the question of a quorum. That was Harry Sanderson who I don't think ever

went to Rutland. But I think all the others went to Rutland and there might have been 22 because of course, Cole and Hopkins had gone over to the enemy, I would say at the end of 1924. Hopkins, of course, undoubtedly influenced by the Ku Klux Klan, which was very active even in those days. In fact, representatives of the Ku Klux Klan, had acted as body guards for the senators after they had left the State House on June 19 or whatever the date may have been. Mr. Smith:

I got a chance to do a little more research on that. Apparently your neck of the woods was the hotbed of activity.

Judge Quinn:

But Coventry I think certainly was. And, of course, as I say, they had burned crosses across from my house in West Warwick. And I would say perhaps it more than anything else accounted for the defection of Jesse Hopkins. He and Fred Foe. Of course, Hopkins was a big fat bumbling kind of a guy whose mentality was not too large, I would say. Fred Foe from Warren was, of course, I think was a former minister, and he had college training and good education in the ordinary sense but I would say I think the man was unstable, very unstable. I think perhaps he used drugs, which of course, was rare in those days. He was very unstable, of course, the both of them went over to the Republican Party. And, of course, I supposed they succumbed to the blandishments of the party and the Klan, and I imagine that money flowed fairly freely too in some cases. They had plenty of it. I think, maybe it would be a combination of forces that would account for that. Definitely as far as Hopkins was concerned it would be the Ku Klux Klan. As far as Coe was concerned, I mean he had to pinpoint it but he was a volatile character, I would say and perhaps there were several reasons for his deserting.

Mr. Smith:

Judge, did you ever get a chance to read something by Zachariah Chafee, The State House- the Pent House? I'm waiting to get a copy of it. Do you have any impression on that as to its accuracy, its worth?

Judge Quinn:

Well, now, of course, I haven't read it in a long time, Matt. I think, perhaps, it was quite accurate and of course, no doubt that Zachariah Chafee was a very able legal scholar. He was a professor at Harvard Law School for many, many years. He, of course, was uncle I think of former Governor Chafee. I'd say a very able man and my recollection of the document is perhaps it was factual and fair. I certainly don't think that there was any inclination on the part of Chafee to have any prejudices against me. That's my recollection of it. One of his associates, Professor...

Mr. Smith:

It wasn't Hedges.

Judge Quinn:

No. This man was a general in the Air Force Reserves. General down in the Air Force and he wrote a poem, rather an interesting one or engaging one to me about the race track in 1938. He came here and spoke to the R.I. Bar Association. And, in other words, I was supposed to be at that meeting and I intended to be, but something developed where I couldn't attend the meeting. And he had a poem which he read quite amusingly. I got it from there. He died here only last year. I can find it for you and give it to you. There's no question about that. But whether I can put my hand on it immediately, I just don't know. Bart. His first name was Bart. And he was a professor at Harvard Law School for...maybe it would be better for me to try to find it later on. Leach. His name was Leach. And I would say he was an associate of Chafee for many, many years. He died here a few months ago. And as I say, he was a reserve general in the Air Force. But he used to play the guitar and he was a bit of an entertainer as well as a law professor. Very able man. And he has this poem about the race track and as I say I can locate it and it may be quite interesting. It's very well done. Of course, it took a few cracks at me, but I guess the target was mainly O'Hara. And I would think

maybe Pent-House vs. State House would be a fair description from a legal standpoint of what was happening. I don't remember exactly what the development of Chafee's argument was, but I'm quite sure, I'm quite sure it was fair.

Mr. Smith:

I'll wait and I'll get a copy of that. And maybe, if there's anything in there that we didn't talk about, we'll go over it.

Judge Quinn:

All right.

Mr. Smith:

It was probably published and there are some around. I'll get a copy of it in... the Providence Public...they have a collection down there.

Judge Quinn:

I've got a copy in the drawer though of Leach's poem which is quite interesting. I'll dig that out for you, Matt.

Mr. Smith:

Fine.

Judge Quinn

And have a copy made for you.

Mr. Smith:

Fine.

Judge Quinn:

I could probably find it in a half-hour or so. But I know I've got it in the drawer there.

Mr. Smith:

What I was going to say, Judge. Now, you closed the track down, and O'Hara went out. Of course, he'd only got in till '38 and of course he ran against you several times.



Judge Quinn:

Yes, he did.

Mr. Smith:

A ragtáil effort. But enough to, I think, embarrass the party.

Judge Quinn:

Well, of course, it cost me some votes. It hurt the party. Maybe it might have been the cause of the defeat. Although, I have my doubts about that. I think that O'Hara, perhaps was financed by Vanderbilt and the Republican Party. My guess would be. I don't know that I can't prove that that was so, but I'm almost certain that that happened, that they put up the money, because I think O'Hara at that time was beginning to lose ground financially.

Mr. Smith:

Of course, he was running a newspaper. That was during ...

Judge Quinn:

Yes, that's a big drain. That's a very, very expensive proposition.

Mr. Smith:

Question, Judge. As far as your two years in office, you talked about the depression being a cause, coming in in '37, of course, and hard times in back of the country, the question of the race track war and of course, the income tax. We covered those three things.

Judge Quinn:

All contributory factors, Matt. Of course, if you remember I don't think you do, but Herbert Leeman, of course, was Governor of New York, a very popular governor. He succeeded Al Smith and I think in 1936 he won by 860,000 votes-his margin. In 1938 he won but he was cut down to 50,000 votes from 860,000 to 50,000.

Mr. Smith:

You can see there was a trend.

Judge Quinn:

Governor Earl of Pennsylvania got beat. Phil Lapolla got beat in Wisconsin; Elmer Benson got beat in Minnesota. Henry Horner was beat in Illinois, all fairly substantial states. Of course, Illinois and Pennsylvania, large states. But there was a definite swing to the Republican Party in 1938 and in my opinion it was the economic situation because they didn't have any race track situations in New York and Pennsylvania and Illinois. I would say that the main cause of the regression or falling away from large pluralities of '36 was the economic situation. I think, you see the WPA had filled a gap in 1936 and '37. \$13.00 a week after starving to death was fairly substantial but after three or four years of \$413.00 a week it began to get monotonous and the people wanted something better and they weren't getting it. And so, I think the time came when they were going to blame their troubles on to Roosevelt, and Flynn, and Horner, and Earl, and Leeman and so forth. So there was a definite slippage all along the line. Falling off in the dark.

Mr. Smith:

What about also, Judge the... I know you did things in education down at U.R.I. Had concern there. What I also wanted to check with you would be your impression of the New Deal. Of course, you came in late or you were in in '34, just as things got underway. You became Chief Executive late in the New Deal in the sense that I think most historians now feel that by '38 there had been a conservative swing back even in Congress and then at the same time most would feel that the war is what ... build up for the war is really what lifted the economy back into a full employment situation.

Judge Quinn:

Well, I think that's what did it, 1939 and 1940. But in 1937, we didn't feel that impace. In other words, economically things had been

Mr. Smith:

Do you think we were in kind of a twilight zone there? I think you put it rather nicely. The people after three or four years of \$13 or \$14 a week began to believe that nothing better would be coming. Industry was not outstanding and jobs weren't coming.

Judge Quinn:

I think that's my impression. I think for the first year or two it was better than it had been. And even \$13 a week was worth not being without a job and not having any food in the house or any coal in the cellar. And so, I would say the first couple of years of WPA- it filled a void, filled a need, and I think that people were reasonably happy with it. But I'm sure that as time went on, they began to show some dissatisfaction and they wanted jobs and they weren't getting them, and so there was almost as much of a crash in my opinion in 1937 economically as there was in 1930.

Mr. Smith:

Of course, disillusion which accompanied that was reflected on the rulers in office.

Judge Quinn:

Definitely yes. That happened all right.

Mr. Smith:

Well, what about other programs as far as the administration of the New Deal here in the state. I know the expansion down at Kingston, you know with your years.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, it was a substantial expansion down there. Of course, I was always a great friend of education. Walter Ranger, of course, was the old Commissioner of Education when I first went up to the State House. They established it in '23 and '24. And I guess he had been Commissioner for many, many years. He was a fine old man, but not a very aggressive individual. But from the time I first got into politics I

Always did everything I could do to help the educational system of this state. My sister who was Superintendent of Schools in West Warwick until she retired - two years in the school system from the time she got out of normal school till the time she retired as Superintendent of West Warwick schools... she had been in the school system for fifty-two years. And had, I would say, a rather honorable career.

Mr. Smith:

Is there any single piece of legislation or movement that you take special pride in, during those two years that you were Governor as far as being able to move it through the legislature and bring it to fruition? I know the income tax was a disappointment but other than that, any secondary?

Judge Quinn:

Of course, the constitutional convention had gone down the drain, in other words, that had been brought to fruition in the sense of getting it before the people for a vote and that was no easy job, but we finally did get a vote through the State Senate. Of course, the House had passed it before hand, and after much persuasion, some of the Senators from the smaller towns who had found it hard to swallow. They did vote to submit the question to the people and then in 1936, of course, I had gone all over the state. I think for forty days and forty nights, I had campaigned all over the state of Rhode Island trying to get them to ratify the Constitutional Convention. But, of course, we were beaten by about 10,000 votes, inspite of all that I could do. And I certainly did as much as all other leaders put together, I would say. I don't think that that's an exaggeration to say that I had done as much as all our Democratic leaders put together. I think they were all interested. And I think Governor Greene was definitely for it and I guess all of the members of the state ticket, a lot of the senators and so forth, and they worked hard. But I guess the burden fell on me and I couldn't make the grade, that's all.

Mr. Smith:

I just wanted to ask you in general about that whole period of the Democratic ascendancy. One fellow-did you ever read Duane Lockhart? He wrote New England State Politics? And he has a statement in there. He talks about the politics of revenge. When the Democrats came into Rhode Island that they were as interested in getting sinecures, patronage positions, etc. as the Republicans had been over the past hundred years. Do you think this a fair or unfair statement, Judge?

Judge Quinn:

Well, I think there would be perhaps some justification for it. I don't think that as far as I was concerned, revenge ever played any part whatsoever. I certainly never was looking for revenge against anybody or anything. However, I think that Democrats like Republicans were looking for jobs. And, perhaps in one sense they needed it more than the Republicans. Certainly, I think the wealthy class of people was definitely embraced in the Republican Party. There weren't very many rich Democrats. I know there were some. But I would say that would be a fair statement, that they were looking for jobs and perhaps, justifiably. I definitely ended the practice of dual office holding during my term as senator.

Mr. Smith:

This is one thing I find a little incongruous with Greene especially in that January-August 1935 period was really if the party had carried through with some of the long-term problems that should have been amended or adjusted along with especially what you did with the Constitutional Convention if there had been an all out effort. I mean these were certain principles that they would always continually run on, that you had talked about since Sl in '22. If anything, maybe the revolution wasn't as successful as it should have been.

Judge Quinn:

Well, it wasn't. I think that's right. And I think that reference that you made a few moments ago about Democrats looking for jobs as rewards began to play its part. And, I think perhaps one of the weaknesses that we ran into in that period was, I think, that Governor Greene who didn't need any job himself, of course, because he was a rich man. Rewards wouldn't interest him in the sense of getting a job. But, I think he did succumb to the blandishments of some of his advisors in giving out jobs to followers who otherwise perhaps would have voted for things like the income tax and the constitutional convention in the direct primary law. Definitely, I would say there is justification for the assertion in the book. I haven't read that book as far as I know. But I would say that's justified in saying the Democrats then were looking for jobs. They were.

Mr. Smith:

What about, Judge, the idea of dual office holding? That must have been a story in itself to eliminate that from the legislature.

Judge Quinn:

Very, very difficult job to do it, Matt. Henry Lapan was the last member of the legislature to hold... I think he was the deputy to the high sheriff of Providence County. In other words, not only the Deputy Sheriff but I think he was assistant to the High Sheriff. And the question came as to whether or not he could continue to hold that or continue on as Senator from Burrilville. And finally he made the choice and decided to stay on as Assistant Sheriff and give up his place in the Senate from Burrilville. And I think that was the last member of the General Assembly to hold an office under the executive. And I think that ended dual office holding during my term. I think it stepped in again afterwards to some extent. But, I would say not anywhere near to the extent that it had existed under the old Republican organization.

Definitely.

Judge Quinn:

It's an evil. No question about it. Any man holding an office in the state legislature should not hold an office in the executive branch. They're inconsistent and subject to manipulation. Naturally a member of the legislature that wants to exercise his free choice and so forth and he's getting a salary from the executive office, why, naturally he can be influenced by the executive office. And they are two completely separate divisions of government. And of course, it should be completely separate. So it's incompatible to have a member of the legislature taking money from the executive department. Now, of course, an extension of that is that you don't have to be a member of the legislature. Perhaps, you can be a member of the city council or you can hold an office in the City of Providence or the City of Pawtucket and be influenced by the executive departments of those cities. So perhaps if we were to have a situation you'd have a situation where a member of the legislature shouldn't hold any other office, either state or municipal. I don't think we have adopted that slate.

Mr. Smith:

No. Patronage runs the system.

Mr. Smith:

I think we're all set, Judge. We were talking about banking, insurance, and education.

Judge Quinn:

I think all of those organizations were controlled by the Republican Party or its members. Certainly, the Democrats have done very little in the Banking field, although now I think maybe you might have to admit that the Columbus National Bank might be headed we'd say by Democratic representatives. I think Mike Gammino was the President of that concern and they did have on the Board of Directors at one time Congressman Fogarty and Senator Pastore. I think Senator Pastore is still a member of the Board of Directors of the Columbus National Bank. Now, they've done pretty well, I'd say and might be regarded as a substantial banking organization. I think most of the other banks would be in the control of the Republican Party. Certainly, the two large banks, the Industrial and the Hospital Trust I would say are in the control of members of the Republican Party. Although, I think John Cummings, the President of the Industrial National today might resent that. I think he's a Democrat. And fine outstanding young man. But I would say that the public utilities and the insurance companies, both fire and liability and all the financial institutions of the state are generally speaking in the control of the Republican Party or families that perhaps play a large part in the Republican Party.

Mr. Smith:

I don't know, but it seems to me that the Irish especially are more security oriented. They're not inclined towards business ventures.



I mean you can count maybe one or two Irish construction companies. Except for funeral homes, they usually go towards teaching, the law, government work, doctors: Of course, some people say this is the impact of the religion, concern more with the other world than this world. That we don't have the same drives as say other Calvinistic Protestants and so forth. That's, you know open to any type of interpretation. But it seems at least in this state that as far as really large business concerns, like banking, you'll find the Irish although they are very strong in politics, are in the second echelon or the third echelon in those areas and maybe small business at the very most.

Judge Quinn:

Of course, I think that's true I think the Irish in Massachusetts and New York, both have done better in the large corporations, insurance, banking and so forth than they have done in Rhode Island. Although as I have just pointed out to you, John Cummings is now the president of the Industrial Trust Company which I think is the largest banking institution in the state. I don't know it might be a fight between Hospital Trust and Industrial, but I think the Industrial is probably the largest and the President of that concern now is an Irishman. So, to some extent they have made headway. In the construction field, of course, we've got the Gilbanes who have done very well, I would say. They're a rather large construction outfit.

Mr. Smith:

They're all over the coast, I think.

Judge Quinn:

All over the land, I would say. They have developed a large building industry. I don't know, they've got a large engineering outfit. They're associated with-let's see- Reynold's Aluminum, I think, they're tied in with in the development of the Weybosset Hill project. But they've got some large contracts, not only in Rhode Island, I mean all over the nation. So

they're a big outfit. And they're Irish, of course; I think maybe there's some tendency on the part of the young Irishman to go into the insurance and manufacturing division. But certainly during my time, the large manufacturing establishments, the insurance companies, the banking industry, and so forth almost impossible for the Irish to make very much headway in those fields. As I say in Boston and New York, I think they made more progress than they did here in Rhode Island. But I say gradually perhaps there's beginning to be an erosion here. I think as time goes on, perhaps, there will be more. Of course, I think the Italians, I mean if you're talking about religious situation, I think you'd have to admit now, that during the last war there were a large number of Italian industrial developers that went into the millionaire class, you know, as the result of the last war. They may be largely Catholics, of course, So I don't think you could put it on a strictly religious basis. In other words, I think the Italians came along a lot faster than the Irish did. In fact, perhaps they made a lot more of their opportunities.

Mr. Smith:

Now, Judge, if you wanted to talk about the campaign of '38. I know it was a disappointment. It had to be a disappointment for you. In fact, it was a close race actually a lot closer than people tend to think.

Judge Quinn:

Well, of course...

Mr. Smith:

Of course, McCoy was at the state convention again.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, he was. Of course, he was still an O'Hara man, you know. And McCoy had got to be a pretty close associate of Walter O'Hara, I think in

the years '36, '37, and '38. And along in those years, I think McCoy was very, very close to O'Hara. I just don't know whether he was as close to him when he died or not, Matt. But certainly after he was thrown out of budget director by Governor Green, I think he became pretty well cemented to Walter O'Hara. And about everything that went on politically went on with the collaboration of Tom McCoy and the McCoy organization. Although, there were members of that organization who certainly didn't like Walter O'Hara.

Mr. Smith:

Were the other members of the party who were dissatisfied in '38 urging you not to run or was it...I know, of course, McGrath comes on in '40 and gets the nomination again, not again but for the first time actually. Would you care to say that you wanted a chance to redeem yourself in '40.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, I would have run. If I could have got the nomination I would have run in 1940, because I think that people had begun to realize by that time that perhaps I wasn't quite as bad as Mr. O'Hara and company had pointed me out to be. I couldn't get the nomination in 1940, Matt. I was a candidate and had canvassed the situation pretty well. And I had the support. No question about it. There were a lot of Democrats throughout the state that would have voted for me even if the Lord, I think was the candidate against me. Now I had an awful lot of loyal followers. But on the otherhand, there were a fringe that was Wishy-washy and there I think the advantages that my opponenats had were powerful- Gerry, and Green, and McGrath and company frankly had a lot of money to spend and I didn't. And I think that played a part. In addition to...

Mr. Smith:

Do you think they were definitely against you running- Green, Gerry and I know Mc!Grath...

Judge Quinn:

Oh yes, they were. They were against me. Absolutely.

Mr. Smith:

Well, Judge, I wouldn't classify you as a maverick, but certainly you were independent of being anybody's man or being a part of a certain organization. If you had to do it over again, of course, I know you would do the same thing. But would--well, we talked about that '34 thing, different coalitions.

Judge Quinn:

Yes.

Mr. Smith:

Based upon the immigrant.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, there was that possibility and I'd say there were powerful members of the party that thought at that time that it was the right thing to do. And I can't say that it wasn't. But my political friends largely were against it. As I say, I think the men that we were consulting at that time that John McGrane was the only outright fellow for making the fight. In other words, he thought I should line up with Flynn, Congdon, and McCoy and so forth, and he may have been right. But the other fellows who were close to me and who were loyal to me, I think in all

of weakening, I think. But there were other fellows; there were other men involved in it. Louie Capelli and fellows of that kind who were pretty friendly with me; so they did not want to make the break. They did not want to make the fight.

Mr. Smith:

Of course by '40, you had McGrath who was an ambitious man to say the least.

JudgeQuinn:

Yes, yes he was.

Mr. Smith:

And willing to make his move with Greene and Geary backing. And you had mentionned that your good friend, Judge Sanders had inadvertently or indirectly hurt you in Portsmouth.

Judge Quinn:

In Newport.

Mr. Smith:

Excuse me, in Newport.

Judge Quinn:

In Newport with John Nolan, he had. Definitely. In other words, he was an assistant attorney general in the office with John Nolan. Of course, John Nolan was a college chum of mine, and always a supporter of mine and a fine man. As I say, one of the most effective men ~~that~~ ever stood on the floor of that Senate. John McGrane and John Nolan were both extremely able men. Good talkers. No better ever took the floor of the Senate than McGrane and Nolan. And he had

nominate~~d~~ me for the leader of the Senate when I went back there in 1928. And he was a loyal supporter . But when DeCiantis went to him and told him that I was his choice for Attorney General, I think he got quite insulted and of course, he believed it apparently, and it was only when the campaign was developing that I found out from John Nolan why he was not supporting me with the Newport delegation and he told me, of course, and I straightened that out. But it was too late.

Mr. Smith:

How close did you come in the convention, Judge?

Judge Quinn:

I don't think I actually went to the vote in the convention. I did in 1946 for United States Senator with McGrath. But I didn't let my name go in to the board. I think as we counted them it's my recollection that we probably had about seventy to seventy-five votes. But we had to have one hundred, of course. And in addition to losing Newport which I think perhaps rightfully belonged to me, there were definitely signs of weakening on the part of some of my supposed supporters from Providence. And in any event...

Mr. Smith:

What about Pawtucket, Judge?

Judge Quinn:

Pawtucket would have been against me. In 1940 Pawtucket would be against me. Yes, definitely. There was some doubt about that for a time, Matt. I don't think ever there was really any love between McCoy and McGrath. Certainly there wasn't any love between McCoy and Greene. And of course, McGraw was a Gerry-Greene man. But they made an offer to give McCoy two places on the ticket. And he picked Russell

Handy I think for Treasurer and Cote for Secretary of State. I think that was the deal. And that did it. In other words, McGrath succeeded in giving McCoy what he thought was a value to him for his support. So he ~~had~~ his support. And John McElroy was I think then Chairman of the City Committee in Providence and Denny Roberts, also more or less they both told me that anything they could ever do for me, they would be with me 100%. But it didn't turn out that way and so forth. I lost doubt in some cases before that night. I may have had one, maybe one or two bad breaks along the way, like with John Nolan of Newport. In other words, it wasn't a hopeless task by any means in 1940, Matt. I think I had a nucleus of making a good fight, but I had to have either Pawtucket or the East Side of Providence, or Newport or one of the other places. A strong Woonsocket, a strong South County, Kent County and so forth. But I knew, Matt, I did not have enough to win. And I didn't actually go in. I did, of course, go in as a candidate against McGrath in 1946. But I got beat by... well, I think I had 55 votes out of 290. Well, of course, the organization, everything was against me there as far as power was concerned except, of course, my power to talk. But he had given me—McGrath had given me his word at that time, you know that he would not run for senator. We had sat down with him, John Fogarty and I sat down and had gotten his word on it that he would not run. The the minute Gerry withdrew as a candidate, why he became a candidate. In other words, I think Howard really maybe used me to drive Gerry out. But I...then he wanted me to withdraw but I said "oh, no". That was it. I, of course, got beat.

Mr. Smith:

Well, at that point Judge. I know of course you were very close to

John Fogarty.

Judge Quinn:

Yes.

Mr. Smith:

And without... when you look at the structure of Democratic politics in the state, of course, that Providence population and vote, of course, Pawtucket and your coming from the Pawtuxet Valley without one or the other. You'd have to have at least part of it, right, to carry yourself over into a state convention.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, you really had to have. If I had, I'm convinced as far as 1946 was concerned if I had Pawtucket I would have won. Or if I had Providence I definitely would have won. Either one or the other. I didn't need them both. I had enough support. See, I got fifty-five votes on the rope. But I probably had eighty-five actually totalled. People you know, who might be embarrassed to have it found out, or published. But if I had had either Pawtucket or Providence in 1946, I would have beaten McGrath for the nomination.

Mr. Smith:

I thought you said the year earlier that McCoy had said he was with you.

Judge Quinn

That was, let me see.. that was toward the end of the year. That was 1945. Yes, if McCoy had been alive I think I would have had Pawtucket. But Jimmy Donovan had come in as City Clerk of Pawtucket, and had control of the delegation in 1946. Curvin, of course, told me that he would deliver the Pawtucket delegation. But when the time



came, I mean ~~that~~ it's true that on the morning of the delegation he offered to deliver eight votes in Pawtucket to support me. But eight votes was no good so I told him to go ahead and do what you want. But whether there was a little monkey business going on at that time, I just don't know. But Jimmy Donovan apparently controlled the Pawtucket delegation. And he was with McGrath. And, of course, the reports that we got... I can't authenticate this because, of course, I don't ...I have no knowledge myself except that a member of the delegation, the Pawtucket delegation told me that Frank Crook put \$35,000 in cash on the barrelhead the night before the convention. And that was the answer to the Pawtucket delegation. Now, that's hearsay, of course. But that was the way it worked out. I came close. I would say far closer than the count in the convention indicated, Matt. If I got a break either one or two ways, I could have beaten Howard who was of course, then a pretty powerful fellow, and who had the support of both Greene and Gerry. I could have beaten him for that nomination. But I had to have either support from Roberts or from the McCoy delegation. And Tom McCoy was dead. After telling me...in fact, the last thing he ever said to me: "Bob, when your're ready to go, I'm with you. " Those were the last words he ever said to me.

Mr. Smith:

I guess Mr. Roberts was looking towards the governorship himself

Judge Quinn:

Oh, of course, Yes. Of course, as it turned out...

Mr. Smith:

You don't seem to have any regrets, Judge or any hard feelings.'

Judge Quinn:

No, I have none, Matt. I think McGrath, and Roberts fell out and became very eminent in the end. The only regret that I have that I think if I had been elected as United States Senator in 1946, may be better in 1940 which perhaps have eventuated if I hadn't gotten into the situation, I think I might have been able to do a lot of things for the state of Rhode Island maybe for the state or Rhode Island, maybe for my country that I hadn't been able to do because of my inability to make it. That's the only regret, I have. I think I could have been an effective United States Senator and I think I could have done a lot more for the state of Rhode Island than perhaps other representatives have done. Now, Senator Pastore, of course, has been an effective representative and I think in the Congress that John Fogarty has been as effective a representative as you could possibly have. But I think that maybe I could have done better than Peter B. Gerry and maybe I could do as well as Senator Theodore Francis Green. I think I could have done a good job in the Senate. That's the only regret. I have no regrets in any other area, Matt.

Mr. Smith:

Of course, it's strange the turns that politics takes, and of course, you take your chances in it. As for if's what I still don't fully see is McGrath- where he got his- he wasn't on the state ticket at any period prior to this. He had...

Judge Quinn:

United States Attorney.

Mr. Smith:

U.S. Attorney.

Judge Quinn:

Then he had been state chairman, you know, for the past...

Mr. Smith:

With the Greene and Gerry backing, I would see how he was able to pull himself.

Judge Quinn:

He was a protege of both Gerry and Greene. Howard had the good fortune, perhaps you might say to have them... I think Gerry had helped with his education, had given his father-in-law, Joe Cataret, a job on the paper. And I think he had found, of course, that Howard was willing to go out and do anything he could do for him. And I think Greene came along and did about the same thing. In other words, he had the backing of Greene and Gerry. Now I think one of ...you spoke...you said something about not being anybody's man. It's hard to know what's going on sometimes, but during the time that I was Lieutenant Governor, Greene was governor, there was a man up in the State House in the Purchasing Dept. named Gordon Bennett. I don't think you'd remember him. He often went to New York and went to work for Anaconda Copper. Got to be a vice-president. And he's still living down in New York. But he was very close to Greene. He used to go down to South County, his lodge in South County. He told me afterwards, after I was defeated. He told me afterwards in 1940 or 1941. I think he wanted to get into the navy and I got him the offer with the commissioner. He told me that they never liked me, Greene's office never like me because I wouldn't take orders from him.

Mr. Smith:

That's the feeling that I think comes pretty close. Of course, the only thing I had to go by was the newspapers and those few recollections in the sense that Freddie Norton put down. But one of the other things that strikes me, I have nothing against Mr. McGrath, by any means. But what comes through about his career is power for the sake of power. If you compare the records, let's say your's and his, I don't think he left anything substantial other than the fact that he held the offices at various times. No way derogatory do I have anything...

Judge Quinn:

Howard McGrath, of course Matt, came in at a time when it was very easy for a Governor. You see, the time when I was Governor people were out of work. Jobs were very scarce and very precious. In other words, very few Democrats had the job that amounted to very much, good salary and so forth. Now when McGrath came in in 1940 employment was out the window. In other words, you had to beg people to take jobs working for the state of Rhode Island. In other words, the war had come on. Very difficult to get people to fill the jobs in the factory and so forth that were open at good wages. And so the demand for political patronage was far less in the 1940's than it was in the 1950's, an entirely different picture.

So Howard had a fairly easy time from the standpoint of satisfying the demand for jobs politically, from 1940 to 1946. When he went out in '45, why you could just coast along the demand was very , very small. So it was a different picture frame.

Mr. Smith:

Definitely.

Judge Quinn:

'30 and '40.

Mr. Smith:

Well, after '46, Judge. That was your last attempt for public office.

Judge Quinn:

The chairmanship.

Mr. Smith:

Is there anything, just trying to remember, state chairmanship. Anything else later on as far as...

Judge Quinn:

No. I never served as State Chairman, Matt. I was on the executive committee and the state committee from the time I was 21 or 22, I guess. I had been very active politically. But I never was a candidate for state chairman. I did support Louis De Pasquale in 1926 against Howard McGrath. I figured that Francis, the way he was, I think he was out of it. McGrath who gave him hell, of course, was trying to get rid of De Pasquale in those days. So I had actually been in control of the state committee at that time. But after that I really had never had any interest in electing or opposing until I became governor when Will Shorecross became State Chairman. This was at the suggestion of well, I think Greene and Higgins played a part in that. My candidate was John Cooney. In other words, I suggested John Cooney. And of course, well, of course, as a matter

of fact he's related to Shorecross you know. Let's see, Betty Shorecross married John's father. I mean, my candidate was John Cooney. But, I don't think they were too enthusiastic about that-Greene, Higgins, and "Company"-McGrath. And so, they proposed Shorecross. Of course, I had nothing against Shorecross. I mean, of course, he was from Rhode Island. But he became State Chairman. But Bill Shorecross was a rather peculiar individual, you know, good man in lots of ways. But he had trouble like our friend, Egleton. I don't think he was as solemn a man as John Cooney. John Cooney was A-#1 in my book. But they persuaded me to put John aside, and later on John I guess was given the job as judge of the sixth-district court. But I'd say John Cooney was a fine man all the way through. I don't think we ever had any better in the state of Rhode Island than John Cooney. John McGrane, John Cooney, John Nolan was really a very fine man, too. Although he did, he had a key to that nomination in 1940 and I think ~~that~~ if John Nolan had stuck with me that it's conceivable that maybe we might have forced Roberts and McElroy and company to... It was close. It was much closer than it appears, you know.

Mr. Smith:

Would you care to comment. I think maybe next time we get together with Bill, I know Billy... he was spinning tails the other night. Maybe he will ask you a few questions if you don't mind.

Judge Quinn:

Oh, I'll be glad to have him. I'll be glad to have him.

That brings back my recollection. Of course, this is a long time ago, Matt, and so forth. I can't remember everything.

Mr. Smith:

Well, I'd like to have a couple of sessions. Maybe talk about your war years. And then, of course as the first judge, Chief Judge of the Military Court of Appeals which happens to be the second court of the land. Well, here we go all the way to the Calley case, which I thought for a while you were going to have.

Judge Quinn:

Well, I guess they're still going to have him but...

Mr. Smith:

Excuse me, Judge. But here again, just in the formation of the court. That's another chapter in your life.

Judge Quinn:

Oh yes. That's right.

Mr. Smith:

I'd like to go into that with as much detail as we wanted to.

Judge Quinn:

Yes, we can put in a session on that.

Mr. Smith:

Well, as soon as I get the political end typed up, we can go over that and maybe if anything else.

Judge Quinn:

Plus, we might maybe review the filibuster days. Now I read that account of Patton, you know in either the last week or two. You've got that book, right?

Mr. Smith:

Yes, Journal Years? Rhode Island Years?

Judge Quinn:

What ever it is. It was far far more acrimonious and bitter exchanges in those days than I. In other words, it's faded in my memory. But there were guns up around those corridors and there were thugs up around there, and perhpas we were very lucky that somebody wasn't killed in that encounter.

Mr. Smith:

Well, maybe we can take a tape and go over that again.

Judge Quinn:

There are probably some things that could be...